

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

NIC 2689-83  
12 April 1983

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: Charles E. Waterman, VC/NIC

SUBJECT: Insurgency: Significant Trends in the Last Decade

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to highlight an obvious but insufficiently noted shift in the political nature of insurgencies worldwide. Most insurgencies a decade ago were leftist or at least anti-Western due to intense nationalism. They were generally backed by the Soviets or their representative, and were victorious. This situation no longer pertains.

2. Specifically:

- In 1973, 10 politically significant insurgencies were underway (see chart). Nine were anti-Western in political content, of which seven were victorious in at least the short run. The one anti-leftist insurgency lost.
- In 1983, there are 12 politically significant insurgencies extant. Six are anti-leftist in political content, of which the outcome of five remains in dispute and one has been largely suppressed. There are also six anti-Western insurgencies of which the outcome of three remains in dispute and three have been largely suppressed.
- Four of the now ongoing anti-leftist insurgencies are against leftist regimes resulting from successful 1973 insurgencies. Soviet "victories" have not been turned into "defeats" but they have become costly.
- In at least two anti-leftist insurgencies, the Soviets probably believe there is US support.

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3. This situation must affect Soviet judgments on support to insurgencies, probably as follows:

- "Peoples Revolutionary War," formerly a leftist preserve, has become a two-edged sword.
- Direct intervention, as in Afghanistan, does not guarantee success.
- Leftist insurgencies are no longer cheap instruments by which to project influence. Initial victories in such wars may be ephemeral, and increasingly costly.
- Increasing Western, and particularly US support, to anti-leftist insurgencies is a disturbing trend, and must be considered a real possibility.
- Support by a leftist state to insurgencies in neighboring countries may now trigger a retaliation internally in the supporting state. This possibility gives any operational planner pause.

4. In short, we have moved away from a situation in which insurgency was a leftist monopoly. In part this is simply because there are more established leftist governments, in part because of more aggressive Western tactics, and in part because of activist regional policies of certain conservative regimes (i.e. South Africa). For reasons outlined in paragraph 3, a case can be made that the overall trend is desirable from the US perspective.



Charles E. Waterman

Attachment:  
Chart

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Attachment:  
Chart

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POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT INSURGENCIES

Admittedly this chart oversimplifies the complex local issues at stake in these conflicts by putting them in solely east-west terms, but is used for illustrative purposes.

1973

						<u>Winner</u>
Nicaragua	Anti-Western Guerrillas		Anti-Leftist Regime		Guerrillas	
Angola	"	"	"	"	"	
Mozambique	"	"	"	"	"	
Vietnam	"	"	"	"	"	
Cambodia	"	"	"	"	"	
Laos	"	"	"	"	"	
Zimbabwe	"	"	"	"	"	
Oman	"	"	"	"		Regime
PLO/Israel	"	"	"	"	"	
Iraq/Kurds	Anti-Leftist Guerrillas		Anti-Western Regime			"

1983

						<u>Winner</u>
*Nicaragua	Anti-Leftist Guerrillas		Anti-Western Regime			?
*Angola	"	"	"	"		?
*Mozambique	"	"	"	"		?
*Afghanistan	"	"	"	"		?
*Kampuchea	"	"	"	"		Regime
*Ethiopia/Eritrea	"	"	"	"		?
El Salvador	Anti-Western Guerrillas		Anti-Leftist Regime			?
Guatemala	"	"	"	"		?
Namibia	"	"	"	"		?
North Yemen	"	"	"	"		Regime
Western Sahara	"	"	"	"		"
PLO/Israel	"	"	"	"		"

\*Leftist takeover in 1970s

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